

REMARKS

By this Amendment, the specification and claims 1, 2, 4 and 11 are amended, and claims 15-20 are added. Accordingly, claims 1-20 are pending in this application.

Claims 1 and 2 are amended to correct minor informalities. Claims 4 and 11 are amended and claims 15-20 are added to recite features supported in the specification at, for example, paragraphs [0019] – [0021] and [0028] – [0030]. No new matter is added by any of these amendments.

Applicants appreciate the courtesies extended to Applicants' representative by Examiner Alavi during the May 18, 2005 personal interview. In accordance with MPEP §713.04, the points discussed during the interview are incorporated in the remarks below and constitute Applicants' record of the interview.

Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-7 and 9-14 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 5,465,304 to Cullen et al. (hereinafter "Cullen"). The Office Action further rejects claim 8 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Cullen in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,594,609 to Kopec et al. (hereinafter "Kopec"). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

As discussed below, Cullen does not teach or suggest an automated document template creation method including inputting data of an existing document that contains a visual design to input an image, decomposing the image into at least one object using at least one image processing technique, determining at least one design attribute of the at least one object, and synthesizing a document template that contains the at least one design attribute, as recited in claim 1. This applies by extension to claims 2-7, 9-11 and 15-17 based on their dependence from claim 1.

Further as also discussed below, Cullen fails to teach or suggest an automated document template creation system including an input device that receives data of an existing document containing a representative visual design to obtain an image, an image processor that decomposes the image into at least one object and determines at least one design attribute of the at least one object, and a template creator that synthesizes a document template containing the at least one design attribute, as recited in claim 12. This applies by extension to claims 13, 14 and 18-20 based on their dependence from claim 12.

Cullen discloses a document segmentation method. In particular, Cullen teaches compressing a document at step 202, extracting run lengths from consecutive black pixels at step 203, constructing rectangles and performing initial classification at step 204, calculating skew at step 206, correcting for skew at step 207, reclassifying mis-recognized rectangles at step 208, merging text rectangles to create text blocks at step 209, merging text rectangles in image areas at step 210, and ordering the text books at step 211. See col. 6, lines 4-57 and Fig. 2c of Cullen.

Moreover, Cullen fails to teach or suggest a template creator that synthesizes a document template containing an attribute. Applicants submit that the classifying and segmenting operations in Cullen do not lead to template synthesis but instead to ordering of blocks as described in Cullen. Such ordering in itself fails, and therefore does not anticipate, creating document templates to automatically accommodate a particular visual design theme, as described in the specification.

A claim must be anticipated for a rejection to be proper under §102(a), (b) and (e). This requirement is satisfied “only if each and every element as set forth in the claim is found, either expressly or inherently described, in a single prior art reference.” See MPEP §2131. Applicants assert that the Office Action fails to satisfy this requirement with Cullen.

Kopec does not compensate for the deficiencies of Cullen outlined above for claims 1 and 6. Nor does Kopec teach, disclose or suggest the additional features recited in claim 8 with respect to decomposing the image into at least one color theme. Kopec discloses automatic training of character templates. In particular, Kopec teaches a training process using a text line of glyphs including logical format and layout based on tag descriptors. Regarding color, Kopec only states "if information indicating the... positions and the character identity of each sample were known, a trained character template for each unique character... could be derived from the pixel colors of the set of pixels that make up each glyph sample." See Abstrat and col. 33, lines 10-15 of Kopec. This description constitutes a wishlist of functionalities, not a teaching that can be used to properly reject claim 8.

For at least these reasons, Applicants respectfully assert that independent claims 1 and 12 are now patentable over the applied reference. The dependent claims are likewise patentable over the applied references for at least the reasons discussed, as well as for the additional features they recite. Thus, Applicants respectfully request that the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §§102 and 103 be withdrawn.

As discussed during the interview, Cullen fails to provide for successive subdivision of objects into subobjects, and merging object location with object information, as provided in the amended and/or added dependent claims.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further is desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' undersigned representative at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



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